

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BRASIL 00339 132111Z

ACTION ARA-14

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FM AMEMBASSY BRASILIA

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INFO AMCONSUL RIO DE JANEIRO

AMCONSUL SAO PAULO

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: OREP TECH ENRG BR

SUBJECT: QUICK DENIAL GOB MIGHT MODIFY NUCLEAR POLICY

1. SUMMARY: PRESS STORIES ABOUT POSSIBLE GOB NUCLEAR
POLICY MODIFICATION BASED ON BRIEF INTERVIEW AT FONMIN
WITH CONGRESSMAN MOORHEAD ON JANUARY 11, FOLLOWING CODEL
REUSS' MEETING WITH FOREIGN MINISTER, ELICITED A FIRM
ITAMARATY REJECTION. THE PRESS REPORTED THAT THE CONGRESSMAN
SAID THAT THE FOREIGN MINISTER HAD INDICATED TO THE CODEL
THAT THE GOB COULD MAKE MODIFICATIONS IN ITS NUCLEAR POLICY
IN ORDER TO BRING ITS POSITION INTO LINE WITH THE US. WHILE,
IN FACT, THE FOREIGN MINISTER HAD NOT INDICATED THIS -- OR
ANY WEAKENING IN THE BRAZILIAN POSITION -- HE HAD SUGGESTED
THE WILLINGNESS OF THE GOB TO ENGAGE IN AN OPEN AND FRANK
DISCUSSION WITH THE USG ON ANY SUBJECT, JUST AS HE HAD HAD
TOUCHED WITH THE CODEL ON A WIDE RANGE OF TOPICS (SEPTTEL
TO FOLLOW ON CODEL'S BRASILIA MEETINGS), AND THIS COULD HAVE
BEEN THE BASIS FOR THE CONGRESSMAN'S REMARK. END SUMMARY

2. JANUARY 12 ESTADO SAO PAULO (WITH SEVERAL OTHER PAPERS
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PAGE 02 BRASIL 00339 132111Z

USING ESTADO'S WIRE SERVICE CARRYING SIMILAR STORIES) CITES
CONGRESSMAN MOORHEAD AS AFFIRMING "CHANCELO AZEREDO DE
SILVEIRA INDICATED TODAY TO THE US CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION
THE POSSIBILITY THAT THE BRAZILIAN GOVERNMENT COULD MAKE
MODIFICATIONS IN ITS NUCLEAR POLICY IN ORDER TO BRING ITS
POSITION INTO LINE WITH THE US." BASIS FOR THIS REMARK WAS
CONGRESSMAN MOORHEAD'S RESPONSE TO ESTADO REPORTER'S QUESTION

CONCERNING THE NUCLEAR ISSUE. AS CODEL REUSS LEFT THE MEETING WITH THE FOREIGN MINISTER, MOORHEAD WAS ASKED "DID YOU GET ANY INDICATION FROM TALKING TO THE MINISTER THAT THE BRAZILIAN SIDE IS OPEN TO NEGOTIATIONS?" HE RESPONDED AFFIRMATIVELY. NONE OF THE PRESS ARTICLES, HOWEVER, REFLECTED THE GENERALIZED NATURE OF SILVEIRA'S REMARK TO THE CODEL; INSTEAD, THEY CARRIED HEADLINES THAT BRAZIL MIGHT REVISE ITS POSITION OR REALIGN IN THE NUCLEAR AREA.

3. JOURNAL DE BRASILIA, ALSO ON JANUARY 12, CARRIED A DENIAL STATEMENT, ATTRIBUTED TO A FOREIGN MINISTRY SOURCE. TO THE EFFECT THAT THE GERMAN-BRAZIL NUCLEAR ACCORD HAD NOT BEEN DISCUSSED AND THAT IT WAS "IRREVERSIBLE AND NOT SUBJECT TO SENSIBLE MODIFICATIONS IN ITS BASIC STRUCTURE." THE FOREIGN MINISTRY DISTRIBUTED A PRESS NOTE ON JANUARY 12 STATING THAT "NOTHING HAD BEEN SAID, INSINUATED, OR ASKED ABOUT THE POSSIBILITY OF MODIFYING ANY ASPECT OF BRAZILIAN NUCLEAR POLICY."

4. COMMENT: THE FOREIGN MINISTRY'S QUICK DENIAL AND FOLLOW-UP PRESS NOTE IS NOT SURPRISING, PARTICULARLY THE INITIAL REACTION WHERE THE FOREIGN MINISTRY SPECIFICALLY LINKED CONGRESSMAN MOORHEAD'S MORE GENERAL COMMENT TO THE GERMAN-BRAZIL NUCLEAR ACCORD. WHILE THE GERMAN-BRAZIL ACCORD WAS NOT DISCUSSED WITH THE FOREIGN MINISTER PER SE, ONE OF THE TOPICS WAS THE PROBLEM BETWEEN THE US AND BRAZIL IN THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 BRASIL 00339 132111Z

NUCLEAR AREA. SILVEIRA WAS TOTALLY DEFENSIVE OF THE NOW TRADITIONAL BRAZILIAN POSITION. HE EVEN WENT SO FAR AS TO SAY "WE WILL CONVINCE YOU ON REPROCESSING, JUST AS WE DID ON ENRICHMENT." THIS STATEMENT -- SUGGESTING DIALOGUE -- AS WELL AS HIS COMMENT THAT HE WELCOMED OPEN AND FRANK DISCUSSION WITH THE US ON ANY SUBJECT MAY HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO THE CONGRESSMAN'S BELIEF THAT THE GOB WOULD DISCUSS ANY ELEMENT OF ITS NUCLEAR POLICY WITH THE US. IN ANY CASE, THE ESTADO REPORTER, BY USING THE TERM "OPEN TO NEGOTIATIONS," PLACED CONGRESSMAN MOORHEAD IN THE POSITION OF RESPONDING TO WHAT WOULD MEAN ONE THING TO THE GOB AND PROBABLY SOMETHING QUITE DIFFERENT AND INNOCENT TO A CODEL WHICH HAD JUST COME FROM AN OPEN TALK WITH THE FOREIGN MINISTER.
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